

Easy Script Word Processor for Commodore 64 Review

Easy Script is Commodore's own word processor for the CBM 64. At present it is only available on a disk; the manual has been written for a cartridge version, however, which would facilitate the use of both cassettes or disks as the storage medium for the text.

There is sufficient memory to store about six full pages of text in memory at any one time. This is not an absolute limitation, though, as files of text can be saved and linked automatically on printing to give an unlimited length of output.

Easy Script operates in three modes - edit, disk and command. Edit mode is the one used to input and edit text: disk mode is for loading and saving files, viewing directories, and performing other disk operations such as file deletion. Command mode is used to instruct Easy Script to perform various functions like printing the text, inserting lines or setting tabs.

At the top of the screen the current status of the program is displayed, including the mode in which the program is running and a range of error messages. When the user is in edit mode the current line and column number of the cursor is displayed

Using the program

After typing LOAD "EASY SCRIPT",8,1 and hitting the Return key the whole screen fills with the message LOADING EASY SCRIPT in large block capitals. This stays on for a short delay, then the screen clears and you are presented with some self-explanatory input prompts.

The first question asks you to specify the number of columns of text on the screen display. Although the screen is 40 columns wide, Easy Script allows you to set widths from 40 to 240 columns. This is particularly useful when you are preparing tables. This question has no effect on the output produced by the program on the printer - full use can be made of the 60 columns available there.

The next prompt asks whether you are using tape or disk as the media for storing the text. And the final question asks what type of printer you are using - you're given a choice of five:

- 0 CBM
- 1 MX80
- 2 SPIN WRITER
- 3 QUME/DIABLO/8300
- 4 Other

After all these questions have been answered to set up the system you are entered automatically into edit mode. It is now possible to adjust the colour combination of the screen, the border and the cursor to whatever you find pleasant and comfortable for

viewing.

Text creation on Easy Script is identical to that of the computer when it is first turned on - cursor up, down, right, left and the delete key all work as normal. As you enter text a flashing cursor follows you around the screen.

Typing the text with Easy Script is easier than using a typewriter in that you enter the text continuously, pressing the Return key only at the end of a paragraph. When the Return is pressed a reverse-field back arrow is displayed at that place in the text and the cursor automatically jumps to the beginning of the next line.

Functions

Search and replace is an interesting feature that is (or should be) standard on all WP packages worth the name - on Easy Script it allows you to replace all the occurrences of a word or sentence of maximum length 32 characters with another word or sentence of up to 32 characters.

This can also be done within a set of linked files. It is very useful if you have made a spelling mistake throughout a manual - you enter the word as you have wrongly spelt it and then the word as it should be spelt and the error will be quickly corrected.

The program will ever recognise text which has been split over two lines, which is by no means the case with all word processors - including some of the more expensive and well-known best-sellers.

To allow you to rearrange blocks of text within your document there are four simple commands. There is even a command to allow you to save a particular block while ignoring the rest of the document.

If an entire word does not fit at the end of a printed line, a 'soft hyphen' can be used to show where it should be split. This will obviously be ignored if the word: does not need to be split

The function keys form an important part of the program's operation: they are used for instance to change the mode of the program, to turn the sound on and off, and to turn the capitals on and off.

Unfortunately the program does not allow the user to make use of the extensive graphics available directly from the keyboard. Instead each time you want a graphic character you have to define it from scratch yourself.

Formatting

A major contribution to the success and popularity of word processors lies in the fact that you can extensively format a document using simple in-text' commands which can be

placed anywhere.

All of these formatting commands must be preceded by a reverse field asterisk (obtained by hitting F3). It has become standard practice when I am typing in a document to have a list of these commands at the start of the document setting up such parameters as the page length of the output, the position of the left and right margin, and (usually) turning the justification on.

Most of these two-character letter mnemonics are easily remembered. You can see that from this list of some of these formatting commands:

```
Justify the text: ju1 (ju0-off)
Centre the text: cn1 (cn0-off)
Align the text to the right: ra1 (ra0-off)
Set width of left margin: lmxx
Set width of right margin: rmxx
Release the margin: maxx
Set text length: tlxx
Set line spacing: sppx
Vertical positioning: vpxx (vo0-off)
Form feed to the end of the page: fp0
Set the typing pitch: ptxx
Set the number of lines per inch: lpxx
Define heading: hdx1:text,,
Define footing: ftxx:text,,
Set the page number: pxx
Set the number of lines inch: lpxx
```

Storage

All the text created by Easy Script is stored as sequential files either on disk or cassette and can be easily accessed from the program. Directories can be looked at, disks formatted and files erased without disturbing any text in the memory. Files can also be merged by the use of a simple command.

Crashproof

I have been experimenting with the program and its many commands for quite a considerable time now: and so far Easy Script appears to be totally crashproof. And when I did accidentally make mistakes, it was able to tell me exactly what I had done wrong (like not switched or the printer or disk drive).

Printing

There are quite a few interesting commands available to control the printer, including 'pause' -this stops the printer during printing to allow you for example to change the ribbon to a different colour: when 'C' is pressed on the keyboard the printing will proceed.

Multiple copies can easily be obtained by specifying the number required. A standard letter can be merged with another file containing people's names and addresses to obtain personalised letters.

All the facilities available on the printer are made extensive use of including the enhancement or characters but excluding the standard graphics available normally.

Conclusions

From what you have just read it should be fairly clear that I think Easy Script is a very good word processor. The price tag of £75 might be slightly expensive for an occasional user at home; but it would be excellent value for money in an office which gets through a larger quantity of typing.

I found Easy Script laden with facilities, simple to learn and provided with documentation that is very comprehensive. I would urge anyone considering purchasing a word processor to look very seriously at Easy Script.

Easy Script on balance

For

- * Excellent text creation and editing functions, including good block operations.
- * Excellent manual.
- * Choice of printers.
- * Excellent print controls including headers, titling, pagination.
- * Multiple files can be linked for a single multi-page print run.
- * Can be used in conjunction with Easy Spell to check for spelling mistakes.

Against

- * Price.
- * Display becomes cluttered with non-text format controls.
- * Does not allow the user to make use of the 64's graphics.

Easy Script Commands

=====

'-' means pressed keys one after other.
'+' means pressing keys simultaneously.

MODES:

EDIT On/Off.....F1
SOUND On/Off.....F1-*

DISK.....F4
 DISPLAY DIRECTORY.....\$
 LOAD DIRECTORY.....+\$
 DELETE FILEs:filename
RESTART PROGRAM.....F1-RUN/STOP

CURSOR CONTROLS:

RIGHT.....CRSR <==>
LEFT.....SHIFT+CRSR <==>
DOWN.....CRSR ^
UP.....SHIFT+CRSR ^
UP A LINE.....<= (backarrow)
START OF LINE.....<=-CRSR <==>

DISPLAY:

NEXT SCREEN.....F1-SPACE
PERVIOUS SCREEN.....F1-SHIFT+SPACE

GO TO:

START OF FILE.....SHIFT+CLR/HOME
HOME.....CLR/HOME
END OF TEXT.....F1-G-E
LINE xxx.....F1-G-xxx
MAX. LINE NUMBER.....F1-G-999

PANNING:

UP.....F1-SHIFT+CRSR ^
DOWN.....F1-CRSR ^
LEFT.....F1-SHIFT+CRSR <==>
RIGHT.....F1-CRSR <==>
STOP.....RUN/STOP
SPEED UP.....SHIFT
HOLD/RESTART.....TAP SPACE BAR

TEXT:

DELETE CHARACTERS.....INST/DEL
 LINES.....F1-INST/DEL (F1 Off)
 BLOCK.....F1-D-CRSR-(RETURN)
ERASE CHARACTER.....SPACE
 SENTENCE.....F1-E-S
 PARAGRAPH.....F1-E-P
 REMAINDER.....F1-E-R

ALL.....F1-E-A
 INSERT SPACE.....SHIFT+INST/DEL
 BLANK LINES.....F1-SHIFT+INST/DEL (F1 Off)
 MODE.....F1-I (F1-I Off)
 RANGE MARK BLOCK.....F1-R-CRSR-(RETURN)
 TRANSFER.....F1-X
 REPEAT (AGAIN).....F1-A
 SAVE BLOCK.....F1-SHIFT+F-blockname
 SEARCH SPECIFY.....F1-S
 REPLACE.....F1-@-M or L
 HUNT.....F1-H-M or L
 SOFT HYPHEN.....F1-.
 LINKING SPACE.....SHIFT+SPACE
 HORIZONTAL TABS SET.....Position cursor F1-T-H
 GO TO TAB...F7
 CLEAR.....Position cursor F1-C-H
 ZERO ALL....F1-Z-H
 VERTICAL TABS SET.....Position cursor F1-T-V
 GO TO TAB...F8
 CLEAR.....Position cursor F1-C-V
 ZERO ALL....F1-Z-V
 DECIMAL TABS (SET).....Position cursor F6-F1-T-H-F6
 DISPLAY TABS.....F1-P

FILES:

 LOAD.....F1-L-filename
 SAVE.....F1-F-filename
 MERGE.....F1-I-F1-L-filename

FILL FILES:

 VARIABLE BLOCK.....F1-B
 MEASURED BLOCK.....F1-B-CRSR<=--F1-M
 FILL BLOCKS FROM CURSOR.....F1-V
 EMPTY BLOCKS.....F1-SHIFT+V
 GO TO NEXT BLOCKS.....F1-F7
 CLOSE FILL FILE.....F1-CLR/HOME
 PRINT,BLOCKS FILLED.....F1-O-F-C-P-filename

OUT PUT:

 TO VIDEO OR PRINTER.....F1-O-V or P
 CONTINUOUS.....F1-O-C-V or P
 WITH FILL FILE.....F1-O-F-V or P
 WITH LINKED FILES.....F1-O-L-V or P
 MULTIPLE COPIES.....F1-O-X-#(RETURN)-P
 STOP.....RUN/STOP
 AT END OF PAGE

NEXT PAGE.....C
CHANGE, VIDEO/PRINT...V or P
CHANGE TO CONTINUOUS...SHIFT+P

PRINT FORMAT:

UNDERLINE OR ENHANCE.....F1-[(F1-) Off)
REVERSE FIELD.....F1-((F1-) Off)

FORMAT COMMANDS

REVERSE FIELD ASTERISK.....F3
COMMAND SEPARATOR.....:
TEXT SEPARATOR.....;
COMMENT.....nb
PAUSE DURING PRINT.....ps
JUSTIFICATION.....ju1 (ju0 Off)
CENTERING.....cn1 (cn0 Off)
RIGHT ALIGNMENT.....ra1 (ra0 Off)
LEFT MARGIN.....lmxx
RIGHT MARGIN.....rmxx
MARGIN RELEASE.....maxx
PRINTER OFFSET.....ofxx
PAPER LENGTH.....plxx
TEXT LENGTH.....tlxx
LINE SPACING.....spxx
VERTICAL POSITIONING.....vpxx (vp0 Off)
FORCED PAGE.....fp0
FORCED PAGE(CONDITIONAL).....fpxx
PITCH.....ptxx
LINES PER INCH.....lpxx
HEADING.....hdxx:text,,
FOOTING.....ftxx:text,,
PAGE NUMBER.....p#xx
PAGE NO IN HEADINGS.....hdxx:text,,Page;#
PAGE NO IN FOOTINGS.....ftxx:,Page;#
HEADING/FOOTING MARGINS.....hlxx:hrxx

Reference: Ruth, Nigel. "Easy Script Review", Commodore User Magazine, October 1983,
pp. 14,17